

Message Text

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 901

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 MOSCOW 3481

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AT THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY. A SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS IS DESIGNED TO
PROJECT PAST SUCCESS AND CURRENT PROGRAM IN A SINGLE
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IMAGE, AND AT THE 25TH THIS ICONIC ELEMENT WAS AS PRO-

NOUNCED IN FOREIGN POLICY AS IT WAS IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. IN A FRAMEWORK OF STABILITY AND CONTINUITY, AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF GROWING SOVIET POWER, "THE EMPEROR WITH GOLDEN FISTS" SAT IN JUDGMENT OF HIS WORKS, AND SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH THE TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS OF A) CONSOLIDATION OF THE "SOCIALIST COMMUNITY," B) SUPPORT FOR "PROGRESSIVE" CHANGES IN THE THIRD WORLD, AND C) "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" WITH THE WEST AND JAPAN. PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WAS PREEMINENT, BUT THE SOVIETS MADE CLEAR THAT FOR THEM IT DOES NOT IMPLY COMPROMISE ON OTHER ESSENTIALS, AND THE REAFFIRMED "DETENTE" COMMITMENT, THOUGH FIRMER AND DEEPER THAN IN 1971, IS ALSO COOLER AND NARROWER THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN 1973-74. THIS SHRINKAGE MAY HELP EXPLAIN THE HEIGHTENED STRESS ON THE COMMUNIST CAMP. CHINA WAS AT THE SAME TIME BOTH ABSENT FROM THE ICONOSTASIS AND OMNIPRESENT AT THE CONGRESS: BREZHNEV, THOUGH SHARP, WAS BRIEF, BUT THEREFATER THE HALL WAS FILLED WITH ATTACKS ON THE CHINESE FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE USSR AND THE GLOBE. NO PROBLEM IS MORE IMPORTANT OF MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE SOVIETS, BUT THE SHORT TERM SOLUTION IS A STIFF FOREIGN POLICY AND A MAOIST WHIPPING BOY. THE TRADITIONAL THIRD ICON, SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, DID NOT GET MUCH SPACE, BUT IT WAS SHARPLY DISTINGUISHED FROM PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, AND THIS SHARPNESS GAVE IT VERY BOLD RELIEF. FINALLY, THE CONGRESS SAW THE EMERGENCE AT FORMAL LEVEL OF THE NEW AND SERIOUS CHALLENGE OF ACCOMMODATING SOVIET PRIMACY IN EUROPEAN COMMUNISM TI ITS BURGEONING DIVERSITY.

2. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, DEMONSTRATED SATISFACTION WITH ITS MANAGEMENT OF THE "OLD ISSUES": RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND THE COMMUNIST CAMP, CHANGE AND INFLUENCE IN THE THIRD WORLD. ON CHINA, THE SOVIETS PROBABLY FEEL THAT HAVE DONE WHAT LITTLE THEY COULD, AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS GIVE THEM NO CAUSE FOR DESPAIR. IN APPROACHING THE "NEW ISSUES" OF COMMUNIST AND THIRD WORLD DIVERSITY AND GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE THEY HAVE SHOWN PRUDENCE AND SOME SOPHISTICATION. NEVERTHELESS, BEHIND THE CONTINUITY AND STABILITY THREE BASIC DILEMMAS LOOM FOR THE SUPERPOWERS: FOR THE SOVIETS, HOW TO HANDLE EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS; FOR US, HOW TO DEAL WITH THE SOVIETS

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AS LONG AS THEY INSIST ON SUPPORTING NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AS DEFINED BY THEMSELVES AND IDENTIFY THE RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR AS ALMOST THE ONLY MAJOR EXTERNAL CONSTRAINT ON THEIR BEHAVIOR; AND FOR US BOTH, HOW TO KEEP THE DOOR TO A MORE STABLE RELATIONSHIP OPEN IN THE FACE OF SOVIET INABILITY TO APPRECIATE AMERICAN POLITICAL REALITIES, AND AS THE BOOK-KEEPERS' MENTALITY CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE SOVIET POLICY PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

3. EVEN MORE THAN MOST OTHER MANUFACTURED POLITICAL EVENTS, A SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS IS AN ICONOSTASIS. IT IS DESIGNED TO SUM UP WHERE THE "GREATEST POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY", AS GEORGE KENNAN HAS CALLED THE CPSU, HAS COME AND WHERE IT WISHES AND INTENDS TO GO. TO THIS END THE LEADERSHIP FASHIONS A DISPLAY OF THE GOOD, THE TRUE AND THE BEAUTIFUL IN THEIR VARIOUS AVATARS. EVERYTHING WHICH TAKES PLACE IN PUBLIC --THE EVOCATION OF THE PAST, THE SELF-CONGRATULATION OF THE PRESENT, THE ADUMBRATION OF THE FUTURE--TAKES PLACE AT THE LEVEL OF SYMBOL.

4. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE TRUE THAN IN FOREIGN POLICY. IN DOMESTIC TERMS, THE LEADERSHIP PRESENTED A NUMBER OF AVATARS AT THE 25TH CONGRESS: THE KNIGHT, THE GOOD SHEPHERD, THE TEACHER, EVEN (WHEN BREZHNEV INTERRUPTED OTHER SPEAKERS) THE MAN WITH THE COMMON TOUCH. THERE WERE ALSO MULTIPLE IMAGES IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ALL WERE GROUPED AROUND "THE EMPEROR WITH THE GOLDEN FISTS," IN VILLON'S PHRASE, SITTING IN JUDGMENT ON THE WORK OF HIS HANDS AND FINDING IT GOOD. NOT EVERYONE AT THE CONGRESS AGREED WITH THIS FINDING. THE EFFORT OF EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS OF ALMOST EVERY STRIPE EITHER TO RETOUCH OR RESTORE THE "E PLURIBUS UNUM" SEAL INHERITED FROM THE PAST WAS CERTAINLY THE FOREIGN POLICY "EVENT" OF THE LAST FORTNIGHT. BUT THIS NOVEL ASPECT SHOULD BE SEEN AND JUDGED WITHIN THE ICONOSTASIS AS A WHOLE.

5. STABILITY AND CONTINUITY--THE WELL KNOWN "PRINCIPLED AND CONSISTENT" CHARACTER OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY--PROVIDED THE FRAME. FIDELITY TO THE PAST, FIRMNESS IN THE PRESENT, FORTITUDE AND RESOLUTION (THE "OPTIMISM" CONFIDENTIAL

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OF BREZHNEV'S CONCLUDING REMARKS MARCH 1) FOR THE FUTURE : ALL WERE REPEATEDLY REAFFIRMED AT THE CONGRESS, AND THERE IS NO REASON TO DOUBT THAT THE LEADERS AND THE BULK OF THE FOLLOWERS BELIEVE IN THEM, ARE PROUD OF THEM, AND INTEND TO MAINTAIN THEM. A "PRINCIPLED AND CONSISTENT" FOREIGN POLICY DOES NOT SIGNIFY ATTACHMENT TO THE STATUS QUO--FAR FROM IT--BUT IT DOES SIGNIFY A CAUTIOUS AND PRUDENT APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS OF CHANGING THE STATUS QUO TO SOVIET ADVANTAGE.

6. SOVIET POWER PROVIDED THE BACKGROUND. UNLIKE "PRINCIPLE" AND "CONSISTENCY," THERE WAS NO PUSHING OF SOVIET POWER A LA KHRUSHCHEV, NO SABER-RATTLING, AT THIS CONGRESS. STILL, SOVIET POWER WAS A CONSTANT PREOCCUPATION IN THE SPEECHES, A MIXTURE OF HEADY PRIDE AT THE

ADVANCES MADE SINCE THE REGIME BEGAN AND ESPECIALLY SINCE
WORLD WAR II, AND CONTINUING TROUBLED UNCERTAINTY THAT
THERE IS REALLY ENOUGH OF IT TO PROTECT THE REGIME AT
HOME AND ABROAD IN A "COMPLEX" WORLD STILL FULL OF ENEMIES.
AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WAS NO UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHETHER
IT IS GOOD TO BE POWERFUL, OR ABOUT THE GOALS WHICH
SOVIET POWER OUGHT TO SERVE; SECURING AND ADVANCING
THE "INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY" OF THE USSR AND ITS
"SOCIALIST" ALLIES, AND ASSISTING "PROGRESSIVE SOCIO-
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS" IN THE WORLD OUTSIDE, AND
MOVEMENT TOWARD "SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM.

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SECTION 2 OF 3 VICE 2 OF 2)G

7. IN THE FRAMEWORK OF "PRINCIPLE" AND "CONSISTENCY," AND AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF GROWING SOVIET POWER, THE LEADERSHIP PUT FORWARD THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TRIPTYCH: THE CONSOLIDATION (AND EXTENSION) OF THE "WORLD SOCIALIST COMMUNITY" CONFIDENTIAL

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AROUND THE USSR; SUPPORT FOR "PROGRESS" IN THE THIRD WORLD, BEGINNING WITH NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT; AND "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" WITH THE "CAPITALIST" WORLD.

8. WESTERN PRESS REPORTING NATUALLY HIGHLIGHTED THE ARTICULATION OF THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE ASPECT, WHICH COMES LAST IN THE TRADITIONAL SEQUENCE, BUT THIS STRESS IS NOT INACCURATE EVEN IN SOVIET TERMS. THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP IS PROUDEST OF THE CHANGES IT FEELS IT HAS WROUGHT IN RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, AND THE EMPHASIS ON PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE HAS MULTIPLE ADVANTAGES. MOST IMPORTANT, THE WESTERN BORDERS OF THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES IN EUROPE ARE SECURE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SOVIET HISTORY. FURTHER, THE ONE LIMIT ON SOVIET POWER WHICH THE KREMLIN RECOGNIZES WITHOUT RESERVATION IS THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WAR, AND THIS GIVES A NATURAL PRIMACY TO ARMS CONTROL, ESPECIALLY WITH THE OTHER NUCLEAR SUPERPOWER, ACROSS THE RANGE OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY. THERE ARE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL FRINGE BENEFITS AS WELL. SOVIET SPONSORSHIP OF ARMS CONTROL LOOKS GOOD TO THE WORLD AT LARGE, AND ACTIVE SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE WEST FILL SPACES ON THE INTERNATIONAL CHECKERBOARD WHICH THE CHINESE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO OCCUPY. DOMESTICALLY, RELAXATION OF TENSIONS WITH THE WEST HAS VISCERAL APPEAL IN A COUNTRY WHERE EXTERNAL TENSIONS AND INTERNAL REPRSSION HAVE BEEN INSEPARABLE FOR DECADES, AND IT KEEPS THE TWIN HOPES OF MORE BUTTER AND LESS GUNS, AND OF ACCESS TO WESTERN TECHNOLOGY (AND GRAIN), ALIVE IN THEIR UNCERTAIN HARNESS. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" HAS ASSURED PRE-EMINENCE IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY, AND BREZHNEV REGISTERED IT AGAIN IN HIS FEBRUARY 24 REPORT.

9. AT THE SAME TIME, BREZHNEV WAS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT--AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER--THAT THE SOVIET VISION OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, FOR ALL ITS COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND WHATEVER COOPERATION CAN BE NEGOTIATED, DOES NOT EXTEND TO COMPROMISES ON THE ESSENTIALS. FOR THE SOVIETS, THESE ESSENTIALS CONTINUE TO INCLUDE THE COHESION OF THE COMMUNIST CAMP AROUND THE USSR, SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION IN THE THIRD WORLD, AND IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE WITH THE WEST. COMPARED WITH HIS 1971 CONGRESS

REPORT, BREZHNEV'S STATED ATTACHMENT TO A CONTINUED EFFORT TO PUT RELATIONS WITH THE WEST ON A MORE STABLE BASIS IS CERTAINLY FIRMER AND DEEPER THAN IT WAS. BUT COMPARED WITH LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS AT THE HEIGHT OF THE USSR'S "DETENTE" AND SALT ITSELF
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WERE FAIRLY WEAK SISTERS IN CONGRESS RHETORIC. PRUDENT HESITATION TO HACK POSSIBLE LOSERS MAY HELP ACCOUNT FOR THIS DIMINISHED ARDOR, AND A CERTAIN COOLING WAS PERHAPS NATURAL AND EVEN HEALTHY AFTER THE INITIAL BREAKTHROUGH HAD BEEN MADE AND REVERSES BEGAN TO JOIN THE TRIUMPHS ON THE LEDGER. LIKE CHEMICALS IN A CRUCIBLE, A FOREIGN POLICY COMMITMENT CAN SHRINK AS IT COOLS. WHATEVER THE REASON, THE CONGRESS REGISTERED SUCH SHRINKAGE IN THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, EVEN AS IT WAS BEING REAFFIRMED.

11. FOR THE SOVIETS, SHRINKAGE IN ONE AREA ALMOST INEVITABLY AFFECTS THE SHAPE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY VISION IN ALL THE OTHERS, SINCE THEY ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED. NO DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE BIRTH OF THE SOVIET REGIME HAS CHANGED THE USSR'S POSITION IN THE WORLD AND ITS VIEW OF THAT POSITION MORE THAN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNISTS STATES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CHINA. FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW, THERE ARE NO CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN "DETENTE", CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMUNIST BLOC IN EASTERN EUROPE, HOSTILITY TO CHINA AND SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, MOVEMENT. ALL THAT IS REQUIRED IS MORE OF THE SAME, PATIENT, EVEN LABORIOUS EFFORT TO ADVANCE SOVIET OBJECTIVES PIECEMEAL ON ALL FOUR BOARDS. BUT DIFFICULTIES IN ONE AREA CAN LEAD TO DIFFICULTIES IN OTHERS. WHAT WAS SCARCELY VISIBLE AT THE HIGH LEVEL OF GENERALITY PROPER TO CONGRESS DELIBERATIONS WAS THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE "OBJECTIVES CONDITIONS" ON THE GROUND. "DETENTE" IS IN TROUBLE IN WESTERN GOVERNMENTS AND WESTERN PUBLIC OPINIONS. THE NARROWING ECONOMIC OPTIONS OF THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, WHICH FACE RISING PRICES FOR THE WESTERN GOODS THEY WANT AND THE SOVIET RAW MATERIALS THEY NEED, COULD OVER TIME DRIVE DIVERSIFICATION TOWARD THE MARGINS OF ALLIANCE COHESION. CHINESE DOMESTIC POLITICS ARE IN TURMOIL. AND THE DIVERSITIES OF THE THIRD WORLD ARE BECOMING FACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AT A MOMENT WHEN THE LAST COLONIALISTS DEPART, AND LEAVE A SERIES OF TINDERBOXES BEHIND THEM. ALL THESE UNCERTAINTIES, WE THINK, WERE REFLECTED AT THE CONGRESS, BUT AS THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY.

12. CHINA WAS IN A CURIOUS WAY BOTH ABSENT FROM THE ICONOSTASIS AND OMNIPRESENT. IT ENTERED BREZHNEV'S CC REPORT AT THE TAIL END OF THE "SOCIALIST" SECTION DEFINED AS A "SEPARATE" PROBLEM, NEITHER FISH NOR FOWL, NEITHER "SOCIALIST", THIRD WORLD, "CAPITALIST," AND THE TREATMENT, WHILE SHARP, WAS VERY BRIEF.
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FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CONGRESS, HOWEVER, SPEAKER AFTER SPEAKER FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GLOBE FILED TO THE PODIUM TO ATTACK THE CHINESE, BOTH AS MAOISTS AND AS THE PRC. THE ATTACKS BY SOVIETS, AT LEAST, WERE OBVIOUSLY DEEPLY FELT, BUT UNIMPRESSIVE AS EITHER DOCTRINE OR FOREIGN POLICY FOR ANYONE BUT THE CONVERTED. NO PROBLEM IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THE SOVIETS THAN CHINA, AND NONE MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH OVER THE LONG TERM. FOR THE SHORT TERM, HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS HAVE CHOSEN A STIFF FOREIGN POLICY POSITION AND A MAOIST WHIPPING BOY, AND FOR THE CONGRESS THIS SUFFICED.

13. THE CONGRESS DID NOT GIVE EXCEPTIONAL SPACE TO SOVIET SUPPORT FOR CHANGE IN THE THIRD WORLD, BUT HIS ICON WAS PAINTED WITH EXTREME CLARITY, EVEN SHARPNESS. THE FOCAL POINT WAS NOT SOUTH VIETNAM, WHICH WAS WELCOMED INTO THE "SOCIALIST COMMUNITY" WITH SOMEWHAT UNDERSTATED MODERATION, BUT ANGOLA, AND THE FELT NEED TO MAKE A RADICAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH THE

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WEST AND COMPETITION IN THE THIRD WORLD. SEPARATING
THESE TWO FACETS OF SOVIET POLICY SO SHARPLY HAD THE
EFFECT OF MAKING NATIONAL LIBERATION STAND OUT IN BOLD
RELIEF. LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE AT THE CONGRESS, THE LEVEL
WAS SYMBOLIC, AND THE EFFECT MAY BE PARTLY OPTICAL.
CERTAINLY IT WOULD BE UNWARRANTED TO READ OUT OF THESE
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PROCEEDINGS A SIGNAL THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NOT RUSH INTO
NAMIBIA, DJIBOUTI OR THE SAHARA.

14. FINALLY, THE CONGRESS REGISTERED THE EMERGENCE AT
THE FORMAL LEVEL OF AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ISSUE IN
SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY: RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN
COMMUNISTS IN AN ERA OF LESSENING EAST-WEST TENSIONS.
IT AFFECTS "THE SOCIALIST COMMUNITY," "NATIONAL LIBERA-
TION" AND "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN
CONDITIONS, AND FITS EASILY IN NONE OF THESE TRADITIONAL
CATEGORIES. THE CONGRESS SHOWED THAT THE SOVIETS
RECOGNIZE THEY HAVE A PROBLEM; IT DID NOT SHOW THAT
THEY INTEND TO DO WITH IT EITHER FORMALLY OR PRACTICALLY.
FORMALLY, THE LONG CONCLUDING SECTIONS OF BREZHNEV'S
SPEECH ON THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM AND THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNIST MOVEMENT WERE OBVIOUSLY TACKED ON LIKE AN
APPENDIX. THE PRIMARY SOVIET REACTION TO THE RAMPANT
DIVERSITY OF EUROPEAN COMMUNIST SPEAKERS AT THE CONGRESS
APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TO PROJECT IMAGES -- OF BREZHNEV,
SUSLOV AND PONOMAREV WITH CUNHAL AND BERLINGUER--AND OF THE CPSU
LEADERSHIP WITH RULING-PARTY DELEGATION HEADS FROM CUBA THROUGH
EASTERN EUROPE AND YUGOSLAVIA TO NORTH VIETNAM
WOULD EMBRACE THEM ALL. PRACTICALLY, SOVIET CONDUCT IN
PREPARATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE
OVER THE NEXT MONTHS WILL PROVIDE THE BEST INDICATORS OF
HOW THEY INTEND TO APPROACH WHAT IS CLEARLY A MAJOR
ISSUE--IF NOT A NEW CHAPTER--IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY.

AS A SOVIET CONTACT WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOREIGN POLICY REPORT PUT IT SARDONICALLY, "POLITICS ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS IN SUCH A LARGE HALL," AND EUROPEAN COMMUNISM WAS AN EVENT BECAUSE THE SOVIETS WERE OBLIGED TO HEAR IT DISCUSSED DESPITE THEIR PREFERENCES. JUST AS CLEARLY, HOWEVER, THE CONGRESS WAS NOT THE PLACE TO WORK OUT SOLUTIONS.

15. ON BALANCE, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP APPEARS SATISFIED WITH ITS STEWARDSHIP OF THE "OLD ISSUES:" SECURING AND INCREASING SOVIET POWER IN THE WORLD, DEVELOPING MORE STABLE RELATIONSHIPS WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO LESSEN THE RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR, KEEPING THE COMMUNIST CAMP TOGETHER AND RUNNING, FENDING OFF THE CHINESE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PROMOTING CHANGE (AND SOVIET INFLUENCE) IN THE THIRD WORLD. IN RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, IT CAN POINT TO A COMMENDABLE RECORD OF GRAIN AT ACCEPTABLE COST, AND TO THE HOPE FOR MORE. IN RELATIONS WITH SOVIET ALLIES, IT CAN POINT TO REAL CONSOLIDATION, AT THE COST OF SOME DIVERSIFICATION AND SOME EVOLUTION TOWARD A GENUINE ALLIANCE SYSTEM. IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA, THE LEADERSHIP PROBABLY FEELS IT HAS DONE WHAT LITTLE IT COULD DO. IF IT IS NOT SATISFIED, IT CAN STILL TAKE COMFORT FROM THE PERCEPTION THAT THE CHINESE, HAVING EMERGED FROM ISOLATION, ARE NOW IN RETREAT ABROAD AND ON SKAKY GROUND AT HOME, AND THAT THE USSR IS SCORING POINTS IN THE PROCESS, MOST STRIKINGLY IN VIETNAM. IN THE THIRD WORLD, THE EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE ON THE SIDE OF HISTORY MUST BE POSITIVELY GRATIFYING TO SOVIET LEADERS AT THIS POINT. WITH REGARD TO ALL THESE TRADITIONAL PREOCCUPATIONS, THEREFORE, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE LEADERSHIP FINDS NO CAUSE FOR APOLOGY, AND MUCH CAUSE FOR PRIDE AND HOPE, AT WHAT SHOULD BE ITS LAST CONGRESS.

16. EVEN WITH REGARD TO "NEW ISSUES"--THE DIVERSIFICATION OF EUROPEAN COMMUNISM, THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE THIRD WORLD, THE CHALLENGES OF FUNCTIONAL INTERDEPENDENCE--THE SOVIETS HAVE NO REASON TO BE DISCONSOLATE. THEIR APPROACH HAS COMBINED PRUDENCE WITH CONSIDERABLE SOPHISTICATION. THEIR HANDLING OF EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS AT THE CONGRESS, WHILE SCARCELY MASTERFUL, WAS NOT CLUMSY EITHER: IT ALIENED NO ONE, AND LEFT ALL THE DOORS OPEN.

17. NEVERTHELESS, THREE MAJOR DILEMMAS LOOM UP BEHIND THE IMAGE OF STABILITY AND CONTINUITY IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY FASHIONED IN MOSCOW: ONE FOR THE SOVIETS, ONE FOR THE WEST, AND ONE FOR US BOTH.

-- THE ONLY DILEMMA THE SOVIETS CLEARLY RECOGNIZE IS HOW TO PRESERVE THEIR LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN EUROPE WHILE ACCOMMODATING THEMSELVES TO THE CLEAR DIVERSITY WITHIN IT PROVOKED BY THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS OF MAJOR EUROPEAN PARTIES. THIS IS AN OLD PROBLEM IN EASTERN EUROPE, BUT THERE A KIND
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OF OPERATIVE MODUS VIVENDI HAS BEEN WORKED OUT OVER TIME. IT IS A NEW AND SEARING PROBLEM IN SOUTHERN EUROPE, WHERE NO SUCH CLUSTER OF HABITS EXISTS. WORKING ONE OUT WITH EVERYONE INVOLVED (INCLUDING WESTERN GOVERNMENTS) IS A MAJOR CHALLENGE.

-- THE DILEMMA FOR US IS HOW TO MAINTAIN WESTERN SUPPORT FOR RELAXATION OF EAST-WEST TENSIONS ANBMFOR A REALISTIC APPROACH TO RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION WHEN THE SOVIETS INSIST ON THEIR OWN DEFINITION OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE AND IN THEIR INTERESTS, AND WHEN THE ONLY MAJOR CONSTRAINT ON THEIR SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE OUTSIDE THE COMMUNIST CAMP SEEMS TO BE THE RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR. THE DILEMMA IS COMPOUNDED BY THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS A DILEMMA. THIS IS A WORLDWIDE PROBLEM, AND EXISTS ALSO IN EUROPE, BUT IT IS ESPECIALLY ACUTE IN THE THIRD WORLD, WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE LESS EXPERIENCED, WHERE THE OBJECTIVE CONSTRAINTS ARE FEWER, AND WHERE IDEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE (OFTEN WRAPPED AROUND THE CHINA AXLE OF SOVIET POLICY) ARE THEREFORE MORE COMPELLING FOR THEM.

-- THE DILEMMA FOR US BOTH (EAST AND WEST, AND THE U.S. AND USSR IN PARTICULAR) IS HOW TO MAINTAIN ENOUGH MOMENTUM IN THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING A MORE STABLE BASIS FOR RELATIONS TO KEEP IT GOING AT ALL, AT A MOMENT WHEN THE SOVIETS, LIKE US, ARE BECOMING MORE SOBER AND CAUTIOUS ABOUT NEGOTIATING, AND WHEN THE KOOKKEEPERS' MENTAILTY SO PREVELANT IN GIANT BUREAUCRACIES CONSEQUENTLY THREATENS TO ENGULF US BOTH.
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Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <27 JUL 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AT THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS
TAGS: PFOR, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006